

EPIDURAL THERMAL POSTERIOR ANNULOPLASTY

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 An apparatus for treating at least one intervertebral disc of the present invention includes an expandable and contractible energy application head having an energy application region and a tissue protecting region. A distance is defined between the energy application region and the tissue protecting region. The distance is variable to protect tissue associated with the
10 intervertebral disc. In one preferred embodiment, the energy application head has smooth, rounded edges, a domed center section, and the edges are sloped to the domed center section such that the energy application head has a wedge-shaped head geometry. In another preferred embodiment, the energy application head is a ribbon-like energy application head. The present invention
15 also includes a method for thermally treating an injured intervertebral disc while thermally protecting vulnerable tissues.